

To Be a Father

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Naruto reflects on what it means to be a father. In celebration of the end of the manga. R&R!

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Disclaimer : I do not own Naruto. Kishimoto-sensei does.

A/N: This one-shot is in honor of the greatest story there has ever been which ended three years ago today (I'm talking about the manga) in which our hero reflects on what it means to be a father. Just so we're all on the same page, this story is set during the last chapter where Boruto is still in the academy and Gaiden. Without further ado, here goes. Enjoy!

When Hinata told me she was pregnant with our son Boruto, I couldn't breathe. Me a dad? How could I be someone I did not have when I was a child? In fact it was not until Iruka-sensei had acknowledged me and gone out of his way to spend time with me that I began to feel this was what having a father must feel like.

No one told me who my biological father was not even the Third who had witnessed my parents' sacrifice so you can understand why I had difficulty wrapping my mind around me being a parent which is probably why I've failed so spectacularly especially after being appointed as our village's Seventh Hokage.

"You are not a bad father," argued Hinata as we sat across from each other in the kitchen. My new position had actually allowed me to come home early so I could eat dinner but instead of having a pleasant night with my family, my son had pointedly ignored me. "And Boruto does not hate you. He just misses you and has trouble expressing his feelings so he acts out hoping to get your attention. He's a lot like you when you were younger if you think about it."

"That's what I'm worried about," I murmured. Today Boruto had painted on the Hokages' stone faces though what he did not know was I did the same exact thing at his age. "I just wish I could talk to him but I don't know how to without sounding like a hardass."

My wife smiled slightly and covered my hand with hers. "Perhaps it would be best to wait and let Boruto come to you. He has your stubbornness, after all."

I sighed. "Sometimes I wonder if that's all he inherited from me, besides my good looks. Unlike me he has a great deal of potential but due to the intelligence he got from you everything comes easy to him to the point he doesn't feel the need to try. He's more worried about his appearance than what it means to be a shinobi. It doesn't help that everyone coddles him especially now that he's the Hokage's son either."

Hinata nodded. "But it isn't your fault Boruto thinks that way. You are a wonderful father who loves his children and would do anything to protect his family and Boruto knows that. You need to be patient until he's ready to listen to what you have to say and teach him."

"Thanks, Hinata," I replied before noticing a small presence hiding in the hallway, Boruto. Evidently our son had snuck back out of bed to listen in on his parents' conversation but I could tell by the way he huffed and stalked away that he was not ready to listen. Yep, he was definitely my kid and may end up being even more hotheaded than his old man.

~ To Be a Father ~

A little while later I found myself in the middle of another family squabble this time between my best friend and brother Sasuke and his daughter Sarada. It all started when Sasuke sent his hawk to my office with a scroll detailing his encounter with a young man wielding the Sharingan.

I decided to handle this matter personally and arranged a meetup point with Sasuke. On my way I ran into the boy who said his name was Uchiha Shin and was going after Sarada and Chouji's daughter Chou-Chou. The girls had been following me so they could deliver the lunch I had forgotten when I left home this morning.

After defending them, I sat down with the girls to enjoy the bento Hinata had packed for me and told Sarada about her father who she did not remember due to his long absence from the village. Glancing at the young future kunoichi, I knew my words were not enough so I resolved to take them with me hoping to bridge the gap between a father and his child.

Unfortunately the reunion did not go like I planned as Sasuke almost skewered the daughter he did not recognize right away leading Sarada to shout at him and demand if Sakura was her real mother or not. And here I thought I had a complicated relationship with Boruto.

Thankfully I was able to diffuse the situation and we all returned to Konoha where Sasuke stayed for a short while and even thanked me for bringing his daughter along.

"If you hadn't, I would not have been able to correct the mistake I should have confronted years ago," he admitted as we sat on top of the Hokage's building and looked out at our bustling village. "I almost lost Sarada forever."

"Being a dad is hard, huh?" I replied, leaning back on my hands.

"Yeah," he agreed before suddenly glancing at me with a smirk on his face. "You know, I still can't believe an idiot like you is a husband, father, and now the leader of the entire village. I guess you're not as much of a loser as I thought you were."

I flushed then gave him a grin of my own. "Don't forget, Sasuke, I was the one who kicked your sorry ass back at the Valley of the End so you could return to Konoha and enjoy the finer parts of a man's life such as having a loving family."

"I think it's you who doesn't remember that, clumsy idiot," he shot back causing me to raise an eyebrow. The former rogue ninja sighed reminding me of the old days when we had been a part of Team 7. "Every time I come back here, which isn't often, you apologize for putting me in this position when I was the one who chose this

mission because Kaguya and her kind are still a threat to this world and I will do everything in my power to keep our people safe. This is also my way of trying to atone for what I did. My mistake was not being honest with Sarada because I thought she would not be able to understand when what I was really afraid of was what she would think of me. Clearly I still have a lot to learn as a father."

"You and me both," I murmured.

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Later that night, I said goodbye to Sasuke and made my way home. I knew the kids were asleep so I opened and closed the front door as quietly as I could before heading upstairs. I went to Hima's room first. My little girl was fast asleep and hugged her stuffed bear tightly. I smiled and kissed her on the forehead then went to check on Boruto.

My son was also sound asleep but when I kissed his forehead, he murmured something. Curious, I bent my head down.

"I love you, Dad," said Boruto in his sleep.

Guess I'm not as bad of a father as I thought.

A/N: And there you have it! A short and sweet one-shot for my hero. Hope you all enjoyed. Until next time, read review and show the love!